

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 8-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 3-5, 7, 15 and 16 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 7. Thus, no new matter is added.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The indication of allowable subject matter in claim 7 is appreciated, it being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of its base claim and any intervening claims. As the subject matter of allowable claim 7 is incorporated into amended claim 1, the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 3-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. As claims 3-5 are canceled, the rejection is moot.

III. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by JP 5549955 to Itamoto et al. (Itamoto); and claims 1, 2 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,894,905 to Tanaka et al. (Tanaka). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

As claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 7, neither Itamoto or Tanaka disclose each and every feature recited in amended claim 1. Therefore, claims 1, 2 and 13 are not anticipated by either Itamoto or Tanaka. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

IV. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 6, 8, 12 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Itamoto or Tanaka individually and in view of U.S. Patent 5,508,577 to Shiga. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As each of rejected claims 6, 8, 12 and 14 depend from claim 1, which has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter, none of the applied references, whether considered alone or in combination, disclose or suggest each and every feature recited in the rejected claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6, 8, 12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Itamoto or Tanaka individually and in view of U.S. Patent 5,831,366 to Kern et al. (Kern). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

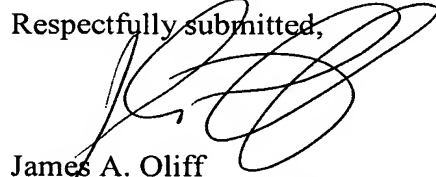
As each of claims 9-11 depend from independent claim 1 which has been amended to recite allowable subject matter, the combination of references fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature recited in claims 9-11. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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